

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177132

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO BEIRUT, PARIS, JULY 25,
FROM DAMASCUS:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2821

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO DOD, DIA & CINCEUR. DOD FOR ISA/NESA;
BEIRUT, PARIS PASS DAO'S

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: ESTC, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN INTEREST IN PURCHASE OF US SENSOR EQUIPMENT AND
FRENCH GUNBOATS (C)

SUMMARY: RETIRED US GENERAL REPORTS THAT SYRIANS ARE INTERESTED
IN PURCHASE OF US MILITARY SENSOR EQUIPMENT. VP OF US FIRM
INFORMS ABASSADOR THAT FRENCH ARE PREPARING TO SELL GUNBOATS
TO SYRIA WITH US GUN MOUNTS FOR LHICH A MC FAVORABLE ADVISORY
OPINION HAS BEEN ISSUED. AMBASSADOR POINTS OUT THAT THIS
PARTICULARLY DELICATE TIME IN US-SYRIAN RELATIONS AND URGES US
REPS TO INSURE THEY ARE ON FIRM GROUND RE MC LICENSES BEFORE
CARRYING DISCUSSIONS TOO FAR. AMB REQUESTS TO BE INFORMED OF
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APPROVALS/DISAPPROVALS OF MC LICENSES AND FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE

ADVISORY OPINIONS RE US MILITARY EXPORTS TO SYRIA.

1. GENERAL JOHN D. LAVELLE, USAF (RET), NOW WITH MARYLAND FIRM DECISIONS AND DESIGN, AND HIS LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE HAYAN S. ATASSI, BRIEFED AMBASSADOR AND DATT 23 JULY ON STATUS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH SYRIAN CHIEF OF MILITARY ELECTRONICS AND SURVEILLANCE, GENERAL AKKAM, RE SYRIAN INTEREST IN ELECTRONIC SENSOR EQUIPMENT. LAVELLE WAS ON SECOND TRIP WITHIN A WEEK TO SYRIA. HE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT IN HIS OPINION SYRIANS HAD A GENUINE INTEREST IN PURCHASE OF MILITARY SENSORS WHICH ARE ON THE SAME ORDER AS THOSE USED BY US IN SOUTH EAST ASIAN OPERATION "IGLOO WHITE." ACCORDING TO LAVELLE THESE SENSORS ARE NO LONGER CLASSIFIED OR TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE PROBABLY BETTER THAN ANY SIMILAR RUSSIAN EQUIPMENT. DECISIONS AND DESIGN CAN DESIGN VARIOUS ANTI-INTRUSION AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS BASED ON THESE SENSORS TO PROTECT FIXED INSTALLATIONS, MONITOR BORDER AREAS, PROVIDE EARLY WARNING, ETC.

2. LAVELLE REPORTED THAT GENERAL AKKAM INTENDS TO PREPARE "LETTER OF INTEREST" WHICH DECISIONS AND DESIGN WILL USE AS A BASIS FOR REQUESTING ADVISORY OPINION FROM DEPT RE MUNITIONS LICENSE. IF OPINION IS FAVORABLE LAVELLE WILL RETURN TO SYRIA, PROBABLY THIS FALL, TO DISCUSS SYRIAN NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS IN DETAIL AND TO SHOW SAMPLES AND PROVIDE TECH DATA. TO THIS POINT AKKAM HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS HIS REQUIREMENTS, APPARENTLY PREFERRING TO WAIT UNTIL HE HAS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT USG WILL ISSUE EXPORT LICENSE. THEREFORE LAVELLE SAYS HE HAS NO IDEA OF TOTAL VALUE OF PROSPECTIVE DEAL OR WHERE SYRIANS PLAN TO INSTALL SYSTEMS. HOWEVER AKKAM APPARENTLY DID TELL LAVELLE THAT SOUTH LEBANON WAS ONE AREA WHERE SYRIANS WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE SYSTEMS IMPLACED.

3. ALSO ACCOMPANYING LAVELLE WAS HIS SON-IN-LAW, WILLIAM J. ENLOE, VP AND DIRECTOR OF EMERSON ELECTRIC, SAINT LOUIS. ENLOE SAID THAT HIS FIRM PRODUCED A VARIETY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRIMARILY FOR EXPORT INCLUDING ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION AND DIRECTION-FINDING SYSTEMS AND

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HELICOPTER ARMAMENT SYSTEMS. ENLOE SAID THAT EMERSON HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED A FAVORABLE ADVISORY OPINION RE THE SALE OF 30MM NAVAL GUN MOUNTS TO BE INSTALLED ON FRENCH "LE COMBATTANT" (TWO OR THREE CLASS) GUNBOATS TO BE SOLD TO SYRIA. BASED ON THIS OPINION EMERSON NOW PREPARING PRICE QUOTES FOR FOUR, SIX AND EIGHT MOUNTS FOR PRESENTATION TO CMN, CHERBOURG, THE FIRM WHICH BUILDS THE SHIPS. BASED ON NUMBERS OF MOUNTS, ENLOE SAID

THAT HE BELIEVES SYRIANS ARE INTERESTED IN PURCHASE OF FROM TWO TO FOUR OF THESE SHIPS. HE SAID THESE ARE SIMILAR TO ISRAELI SAAR BOATS BUILT BY SAME MANUFACTURER, WOULD CARRY EXOCET ANTI-SHIP MISSILES, AND WOULD COST ABOUT 30 MILLION DOLLARS EACH. HE SAID THAT CONTRACTS HAD NOT YET BEEN SIGNED AND CMN PROPOSAL WAS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION BETWEEN FRENCH AND SYRIANS. ENLOE ADDED THAT OTHER THAN THE 30MM MOUNTS HE HAD NO DEALS UNDERWAY FOR SYRIA BUT IN VIEW OF FAVORABLE OPINION ON THE MOUNTS HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES IN SYRIA FOR HIS FIRM.

4. AMBASSADOR URGED LAVELLE AND ENLOE TO INSURE THEY WERE ON FIRM GROUND RE MUNITIONS LICENSES BEFORE CARRYING DISCUSSIONS OF SALE MC LICENSED EQUIPMENT TO SYRIANS BEYOND THE EXPLORATORY STAGE. AMBASSADOR ALSO URGED ATASSI TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY AND TOLD ALL THREE THAT WE WOULD DO OUR BEST TO HELP AND FACILITATE THEIR SALES EFFORTS AS SOON AS WE CERTAIN THAT DEPT BLEESSING HAD BEEN OBTAINED. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUR SALES OF ARMS AND MILITARY RELATED EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA WAS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SUBJECT. ALL THREE GENTLEMEN SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD AND WOULD STAY IN TOUCH.

5. AS DISCUSSIONS BROKE UP ATASSI, WHO IS APPARENTLY USED AS AGENT BY SYRIAN MILITARY FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, TOLD DATT THAT HE HAD LOST A LARGE CONTRACT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO FOR PRC 77 TACTICAL RADIOS BECAUSE USG WOULD NOT ISSUE MC LICENSE. HE SAID CONTRACT WENT TO TELEMAT, A WEST GERMAN FIRM WHICH MANUFACTURES A PIRATED VERSION OF THE PRC-77. HE SAID THAT IF MUNITIONS LICENSES COULD BE APPROVED FOR SYRIA HE CERTAIN SYRIAN MILITARY WOULD BUY SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF US COMMUNICATIONS

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EQUIPMENT.

ACTION REQUESTED: AMBASSADOR WOULD LIKE TO BE INFORMED OF ACTION TAKEN ON DECISION AND DEISGN REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION RE SENSORS WHICH SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO DEPT SHORTLY. IN VIEW OF APPARENT QUICKENING INTEREST IN SALES OF MILITARY RELATED EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD BE KEPT INFORMED RE APPROVALS/DISAPPROVALS OF MC LICENSES AND FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE ADVISORY OPINIONS 'E.G. EMERSON'S GUN MOUNTSLM MURPHY UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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